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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3518
INFO RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1303

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 000490

SIPDIS

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SENSITIVE

USAID/GH FOR DALE GIBB AND JAMILA SQUIRES, IO/EDA FOR
CATHLEEN CAROTHERS, JERUSALEM FOR LIANA BROOKS-RUBIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [UNICEF](#)
SUBJECT: SYRIA: VIEWS ON UNICEF COUNTRY PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

REF: A. SECSTATE 64154
[1](#)B. DAMASCUS 0077

[1](#)1. (SBU) In accordance with ref A, Post has reviewed the relevant country documents. Our only substantive comment is that the documents do not refer to the phenomenon since late 2005 of Iraqi Palestinians attempting to flee Iraq to Syria. Currently, an estimated 310 Palestinian Iraqis live in the El-Hol refugee camp in northeastern Syria, while another estimated 350 persons are camped out on the Syrian side of the no-man's-land in the eastern Syria-Iraq border crossing of al-Tanef. Additionally, as reported in ref B, officials from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have told us that they suspect that up to 7,000 other Iraqi Palestinians may have entered the country using fake Iraqi documents that do not indicate their Palestinian background, although only 241 Iraqi Palestinian children have entered UNRWA schools this year.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In response to ref A's query about UNICEF's overall effectiveness in country, Post notes that UNICEF seems to have a good working relationship with the Syrian government, despite significant political and security constraints on all international organizations working here. UNICEF also cooperates effectively with other international organizations and the USG in Syria.
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